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A SERMON

Preach'd before the Honourable

Houſe of Commons,

At St. *Margarets Weſtminſter*,
Jan. 30. 170½.

BEING THE

Anniverſary Faſt

OF THE

MARTYRDOM

OF

King *CHARLES* I.

By *GEO. SMALRIDGE*, D.D. Miniſter of the New-Church *Weſtminſter*.

LONDON,
Printed by *Tho. Warren* for *Thomas Bennet*, at the Half-Moon in St. *Paul's* Church-Yard, 1702.

A

SERMON

Preach'd before the Honourable

House of Commons

At St. Margaret's Westminster,

Jan. 30. 17[illegible]

Anniversary Fast

FOR THE

MARTYRDOM

OF

King CHARLES I.

Printed by [illegible] Printer to the
the New-Church in Westminster.

LONDON,

Printed by [illegible] at the
Half-Moon in St. Paul's Church-Yard. [illegible]

A SERMON

Before the Honourable House of Commons, &c.

Gen. xlix. v. 6.

O my Soul, come not thou into their Secret; unto their Assembly, mine Honour, be not thou united.

THE Context runs thus.

Simeon *and* Levi *are Brethren; Instruments of cruelty are in their habitations. O my Soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their Assembly, mine Honour, be not thou united: for in their Anger they slew a Man, and in their self-will they digged down a Wall. Cursed be their Anger, for it was fierce, and their wrath for it was cruel: I will divide them in* Jacob, *and scatter them in* Israel.

These words express in a very moving and lively manner the good Patriarch *Jacob*'s just abhorrence and detestation of a cruel and Barbarous fact, with the most deliberate Malice *contriv'd*, with the basest Treachery *carried on*, and with the utmost Inhumanity *executed* by his two Sons, *Simeon* and *Levi*; Men every way Brethren; as nearly allied in *Temper*, as

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in *Rivth*[illegible]; in their Diſpoſitions and Characters very much reſembling, but ſtill far out done by thoſe Regicides, who, as upon this Day, made themſelves drunk with the bloud of the Lords Anointed. In the 34th *Ch.* of this Book of *Geneſis* We have a particular Account of that Crime, which *Jacob* had in his view, when he utter'd theſe words; and it is impoſſible to conſider it, with all its aggravating Circumſtances, without paſſing this Judgment upon the Perſons concern'd in it; that they were Revengeful, Cruel, Implacable, Treacherous; Men, who had no regard to the Honour of their Country, and who proſtituted Religion to the carrying on their wicked purpoſes with the greater facility and ſucceſs. An injury, it ſeems, had been done 'em by *Shechem the Son of Hamor*; and upon the firſt notice of it, without any demand of ſatisfaction from Him, without any appeal to Authority for a Legal redreſs, they enter into an haſty reſolution of avenging themſelves. Having thus made themſelves Judges in their own cauſe, they pay no regard to the ſtated Rules and meaſures of Juſtice; nor obſerve any proportion between the *Injury* they had ſuffer'd, and the *Puniſhment* they award. Nothing leſs than the bloud of the *Offender* can atone for his *Offence*; nay, *Root and Branch*, is their avow'd Principle, and for the Sin of *Shechem* an utter extirpation is decreed againſt the whole Race of the *Shechemnites*. Overtures of an Accommodation, when offer'd, ſeem'd to be accepted by 'em; but under the diſguiſe of a Treaty they proſecute their Revengeful purpoſes; and *whilſt they ſpeak of Peace, they make themſelves ready for War*. An Action thus foul and diſhonourable was ſure to be univerſally deteſted; and would, in the Language of their Father, *make them ſtink among the Inhabitants of the Land*: but being paſt all Senſe of ſhame,

shame, having shaken off all concern for the glory of their Nation, they obstinately proceed in the perpetration of a Crime, which must unavoidably expose both Them, and their Posterity to the reproach and hatred of all Countrys, and all Ages. But to render their Villany compleat, and to give it it's finishing stroke, a *form of godliness* must be put on; They were the *People of God*, and could have no commerce with any who refus'd to enter into their Covenant: *We cannot*, say they, *do this thing to give our Sister to one that is uncircumcis'd*: that had been a reproach to them, and a wound to their tender Consciences: but this Hypocritical pretence of Zeal for the true *Religion* serv'd only for the better compassing their *irreligious* ends; and those, who were so scrupulous of having any Affinity with such as were Aliens to God's Covenant, made no other use of initiating 'em into the sacred rites of it, than to murder 'em with the greater security and dispatch. By this representation of the fact to which *Jacob* here alludes, it appears that the Contrivers of it were *False*, *Violent*, *Ungodly*, and *Inhumane* above the common measures of depravd Nature; and yet it may be affirm'd that their Crime, however extraordinary, both as to its Kind, and its Degree, bears no proportion to the much greater Sin of those *unnatural*, *unparrallel'd*, and *execrable* Sons of *Belial*, to whose brutal Rage our Martyr'd Soveraign was this day made a Sacrifice. Were it proper to appear an Advocate in so bad a Cause as that of *Simeon* and *Levi*, it would not be very difficult to find out some plausible colours for the extenuation of their Crime; It might be pleaded, that they were under no ties of Subjection to those, against whom they lifted up their hands; that the injury done 'em was very heinous, and provoking;

voking; that the treatment, they had met with, was foul and inhoſpitable; that the great diſhonour brought upon their Family was ſuch as might ſeem to juſtifie a more then ordinary reſentment; that their bloud was by ſuch a juſt provocation put into an high ferment, and that it was not yet cool'd, when in *their Anger* they ſlew the *Shechemites*. But can thoſe who are unwilling to *condemn*, who are willing to *excuſe*, who are daring enough to *applaud* the fact of this day, offer any one ſhadow of an Argument to mitigate its guilt, or to leſſen our deteſtation of it? Were the *Regicides* provok'd to it by any *unſufferable* Injuries? Or, were they not by many repeated Acts of Royal Favour and Clemency oblig'd? Had there been any ground for their complaints, yet how was Vengeance Theirs? or whence had They Authority to repay it? Were they not under the ſtrongeſt ties of Nature, and of Religion, to defend *their Soveraign's* Life even with the hazard of their own? Were they not bound to ſupport his Perſon, Crown, and Dignity by reiterated *Oaths, Vows, Engagements, Covenants, and Proteſtations*? and muſt not thoſe, who broke thro' all theſe reſtraints have been poſſeſt with a Spirit like to that of the Demoniack in the Goſpel, *whom no one could bind, no not with Chains, becauſe that he had been often bound with Fetters and Chains, and the Chains had been pluckt aſunder by him, and the Fetters broken in pieces; neither could any one tame him?* It would be *ſome* abatement of their ſin, if we could ſay of them, what *Jacob* here charges upon his Sons, that *in their Anger they ſlew a Man*: but the Murder of this day was not the effect of a ſudden and vehement Paſſion, but the reſult of long thought, ſedate judgment, and mature Conſultation. How often muſt

muſt Nature have ſtarted back from the thoughts of a Crime ſo inhumane, and ſhocking? How often muſt a ſenſe of Duty, Awe, and Reverence, have been awakn'd within their breaſts! And how much miſplac'd pains muſt they have taken to lay ſuch motions aſleep! How often muſt they have heard the Voice of a forewarning, and felt the Terrors of an upbraiding Conſcience? With what Force, with what Authority, muſt this Subſtitute of God in the Souls of Men have pleaded the Royal Cauſe! and with what Difficulty were ſuch powerful Pleas over-rul'd! Did the word of God furniſh theſe Men with plenty of Curſes, which they thundered out upon occaſion againſt their Adverſaries? and could they in the mean time be forgetful of all thoſe Threats of the Almighty, which are ſo frequently, and ſo expreſly denounc'd againſt thoſe, *whom God has given over to a reprobate mind, being fill'd with all Unrighteouſneſs, Wickedneſs, Maliciouſneſs; full of Envy, Murder, Debate, Deceit, Malignity; Diſobedient, Covenant-breakers, without natural Affection, Implacable, Unmerciful?* Were not theſe terrors of the Lord well known to 'em? and muſt they not have frequently ſet themſelves in array before 'em? and after ſo much Time to conſider, ſo many Warnings to retreat, muſt not their Eyes neceſſarily be open'd to ſee *the Angel of the Lord ſtanding* as it were *in the way with his Sword in his hand* to oppoſe 'em, *becauſe their way was perverſe before him*! Thus complicated was the guilt of theſe Sons of violence; in whoſe crimes we might ſeem in ſome meaſure to partake, could we Hear, could we Speak, could we Think of 'em without an hearty Abhorrence, and juſt Indignation. Amongſt the many good ends for which this ſolemn Memorial was by publick Authority at

first appointed, is still continued, and will we hope for the terror of evil works be long preserv'd, this undoubtedly was One, that as the Virtues and Graces of the *Martyr* were to be mention'd to his immortal Honour, so the enormous Sin of his Murderers might be remembred to their everlasting Disgrace. For tho' we may be told by some Men of pretended moderation and temper, that it is now high time to lay aside the remembrance of Crimes so long ago committed; that the *Regicides* have long since answer'd for this fact at the Bar of publick Justice, or at the Tribunal of God; and that it is not decent to implead them afresh, who have already undergone their tryal; Yet certain it is, that such an Act of Oblivion, as is claim'd in their behalf, is neither due to 'em by the Laws of the Land, nor by the Gospel of Christ. For, if to perpetuate the memory of infamous Persons and Actions were any ways unsuitable to a true Gospel-temper, if it were any breach of Christian Charity to brand *Traitors* and *Unrighteous Judges* with an indelible mark of Ignominy, the names of *Judas Iscariot* and *Pontius Pilate* had not stood recorded in those Books, of which not *one jot or tittle shall perish, till Heaven and Earth pass away*. A generous Zeal against Savage and Barbarous Persons, some Warmth of expression upon the mention of Uncommon and Unnatural Crimes, seems not only warranted, but even recommended to us by the Example of *Jacob*; He was just now expiring; and we cannot suspect that in his last moments He was transported by any immoderate, or unseemly Passion: He here gives us the Character of two of his Sons, and the fondness of a Father for his Children should incline him rather to lessen, than to aggravate their Faults. He was

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now bequeathing his dying Bleſſing to his Children, and therefore muſt be diſpos'd to ſpeak the Language of Tenderneſs, and Affection. In theſe Circumſtances, with theſe Diſpoſitions, inſtead of Bleſſing he breaks forth into a Curſe; That indignation againſt the cruelty of his Sons, which had been long ſince kindled within him, and which was not yet by the length of time extinguiſh'd, extorts from him this bitter Imprecation; *Curſed be their Anger for it was fierce, and their wrath, for it was cruel. I will divide them in Jacob, and ſcatter them in Iſrael.*

Now if We would keep out of the reach of ſuch Curſes, as are here denounc'd againſt *Simeon and Levi*, we muſt take care to avoid the like Guilt; Nor muſt We be content barely to avoid it, but We muſt be careful that We make no approaches towards it; We muſt not enter into any cloſe Familiarities with Men of their Character; We muſt ſtand off from 'em, for fear of being infected by 'em; We muſt often ſpeak to our ſelves theſe inſtructive words of the Patriarch; *O my Soul enter thou not into their ſecret; with their Aſſemblies, mine Honour, be not thou united.*

The crying Sin of this Day had in all likelyhood never been commited, had the Caution here given been duly obſerv'd; had Perſons of the ſame Principles and Character with *Simeon and Levi* found no Countenance nor Encouragement from Men, whom we may ſuppoſe to have had different Intentions, and more juſtifiable Deſigns; had none engag'd in any common Meaſures with them, but thoſe to whom the whole Myſtery of their Iniquity was at firſt laid open. But Charity inclines us to hope, and for the Honour of our Nation We ſhould be diſpos'd to believe, that with thoſe Rebellious Subjects,

who imbrued themſelves in the Bloud of their Sovereign, Some at firſt ſat out who were not from the beginning reſolv'd to go the ſame lengths; Who, for want of ſeeing far enough into the conſequences of their Actions, were not ſufficiently aware, Whither they were going, and with Whom they were engag'd. The beſt uſe therefore we can make of our Reflections upon the miſchievous effects of ſuch a Conduct is to poſſeſs our ſelves ſtrongly with a firm perſuaſion of the Truth and Importance of that Prudential Maxim, which is couch'd under the words of my Text, that, *Good and well meaning Men ought to be very cautious how they join in publick deſigns with Men of Ill Principles and Scandalous Characters.*

Good Men are not by the rules of Morality, or by the precepts of the Goſpel forbid *all manner* of correſpondence with *all ſorts* of Wicked Perſons. Where there are probable hopes of making bad Men better, there Charity obliges the Good to converſe with 'em in order to their Reformation. Or where Good Men are in no danger of being corrupted by the Wicked, there they are at liberty to converſe with 'em, without any impeachment of their Wiſdom or Goodneſs. Nor have the Worſt of Men ſuch a wide power of doing miſchief to a Good Cauſe, as that their appearing in it ſhould make it unlawful or inexpedient for Good Men to promote it: what One purſues out of an ill motive, the Other may proſecute with better purpoſe; what One uſes unlawful means to compaſs, the Other may endeavour to attain by ſuch as are warrantable. But the Agreement of Good and Bad Men is then miſchievous, and portends ill to the publick, when they act by joint Counſels, and concerted Meaſures; when there is a thorough Underſtanding,

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and mutual Confidence between 'em; when by a close and intimate Alliance they are form'd into one Band; when the Opposition, there is between them, as Good and Bad Men, appears much less remarkable than their Concord, as united in One and the Same Cause; when they enter as it were into a League Offensive and Defensive, so that all who are willing to come into this Confederacy, whatever their Characters be in other regards, shall be lookt upon and embrac'd as Friends; and all who stand out, without any other Demerit, shall be consider'd and treated as Enemies. Now Good and well meaning Men ought to be very cautious, how they enter into such an Union of Interests as this with Men of Ill Principles and Scandalous Characters, for these two Reasons.

1. Because, by such an Union they will bring a Scandal upon themselves, and upon Religion, tho' they should not concur in the worst designs of those Wicked Men, with whom they unite.

2. Because, by such an Union they are in great danger of being carried on to concur with such Wicked Men in their very worst designs.

And first, *By such an Union they will bring a Scandal upon themselves, and upon Religion, tho' they should not concurr in the worst designs of those Wicked Men, with whom they unite.*

Some Good Men seem to have entertain'd very wrong Notions concerning the value and advantages of a fair Reputation. If they can approve themselves to God and to their own Consciences, they are not

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at all ſollicitous how they ſtand in the Opinion of the World. But certain it is, that this indifference of theirs to their being Well or Ill ſpoken of is ſo far from being commendable, that it is unwarrantable and dangerous; attended with many ill conſequences, and highly prejudicial to the intereſt of Virtue, and Religion. The Goſpel of Chriſt is indeed much more careful to provide for the purity of our Hearts, and the ſincerity of our inward intentions, than for the bare ſurface and external appearance of our Actions. But tho' we are by the Goſpel oblig'd to make the Glory of God, and the approving our ſelves in His ſight our firſt and chief aim, yet a due care of our own Eſteem and Reputation, as far as they may be ſubſervient to God's Glory, is alſo by the ſame Goſpel required at our hands, as a ſtrict and indiſpenſable duty. However therefore ſome Men may think it an inſtance of Humility and Self-denial, to be wholly unconcern'd about a Good or Bad Character, yet We may depend upon the truth of that obſervation which a judicious Moraliſt has long ſince made, that, *to diſregard what others think of Us, is the propertie not only of an Arrogant, but Diſſolute Perſon.*

Now there is nothing that can give a more fatal wound to the Reputation of Men otherwiſe Good, than too cloſe an intimacy with perſons of Infamous and Profligate Characters. It is ſo natural for all Kinds of Men to conſort with thoſe of their own Diſpoſitions and Principles, that it is generally lookt upon both as a Compendious and Sure way of forming a right Judgment concerning any Perſons whom we *would* know, from their familiarity with thoſe whom we *do* know; where therefore the Union between Good and Bad Men is open and viſible, whilſt the Bond,

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which unites them, is secret and invisible, most are apt hastily to conclude, that there is no great difference between 'em; but that the Former inwardly are as wicked, as the Others outwardly appear to be. Good Men may flatter themselves that they are not responsible for these false judgments that are past upon them; that, if Men will thro' Ignorance misconstrue their Actions, or thro' Perverseness misrepresent them, there is no reason they shou'd be blam'd for other Mens Mistakes or Prejudices. This is indeed a Plea, which, where it is truly made, ought to be readily admitted; but which those Men must not hope to reap the benefit of, who by too familiar a Converse with Persons of loose Principles and ill Manners take no care to prevent Mistakes that are so obvious, and to remove such reasonable Prejudices. Our Conduct, as well as our Language, is capable of a double construction; what Truth is in Words, that Goodness is in Actions; and as a down-right Honest Man will take all possible care that his words be true, not only in his own sense / who speaks 'em, but in Their sense also, who hear 'em, so a perfectly Good Man will be equally concern'd, that his Behaviour be right, not only in his own Opinion, but also in the Esteem of all who shall observe it. Whosoever therefore *enters into the secrets, and unites himself to the Assemblies* and Interests of Wicked Men, when he is aware of the Scandal of such an Alliance, is justly accountable to God and Man for all the mischief of that Scandal, which is not only *taken*, but *given*. What Opinion must all Lookers on entertain, when they see the Professors of Religion unequally yok'd together with its declar'd Enemies! How unnatural, how monstrous

must

muſt the Alliance be, when the Clean are pair'd with the Unclean! for, *what Fellowſhip hath Righteouſneſs with Unrighteouſneſs! or what Communion hath Light with Darkneſs, or what concord hath Chriſt with* Belial! *or what part hath he that Believeth with an Infidel!* Can it be thought that Religious ends will be promoted, and Righteous purpoſes carried on by the Servants of Unrighteouſneſs! Will it not be a diſparagement to a Good Cauſe, that the Champions of it ſhould be thought to want the concurrence of Wicked and Helliſh Inſtruments? Let therefore the endeavours of Good and well deſigning Men to promote the honour of Religion be never ſo ſincere; let their Lives and Converſations be in other reſpects never ſo Exemplary; let them uſe all other means poſſible to allure Mankind to the love and practice of Virtue; Yet the encouragement and ſupport they give to Vice by ſuch an Union with Vicious Perſons, as has been deſcribed, will in the Iſſue be found to do more diſſervice to Virtue, and to bring a greater diſhonour upon Religion, than the moſt Scandalous Actions of the moſt notorious Sinners.

Some perhaps may think that Several of thoſe, who in the late times of confuſion join'd in an Intereſt contrary to that of the Royaliſts, were Perſons who meant well, and who truly intended the publick good; no Enemies of our Conſtitution, but ſincere Lovers of their Country; and affectionately zealous for the Liberties of the People, and for the Purity of Religion. God alone knows their hearts, and it becomes not Us to be too forward in judging of their Intentions. But were their deſigns never ſo innocent, yet we have reaſon to lament, that their unhappy Conjunction with thoſe Men, whom no ex-

exceſs of Charity will permit us to think well of, has brought a laſting diſgrace upon Their Memory, and a great diſhonour upon our Holy Religion. How hard has Poſterity found it to diſtinguiſh between thoſe who are ſaid to have intended the Support, and thoſe who are known to have procur'd the Overthrow of our Engliſh Conſtitution? How difficult is it at this diſtance to diſcern, Who they were that deſign'd to Reform publick abuſes, and Who reſolv'd to Overturn the eſtabliſhment of Church and State? Common Fame has made little difference between thoſe who Reſiſted, and thoſe who Murder'd the King; and whilſt they, who pretended only to oppoſe the encroachments of Arbitrary Power, have been liſted under the ſame Colours with the Enemies of Regal Government, it has not been eaſie for the generality of Obſervers to find the difference between the Precious and the Vile, and to diſcriminate the Patriot from the Rebel. Nor has this ſuſpicious Conduct caſt a greater blemiſh upon the Characters of Men profeſſing Religion than upon the Honour of Religion it ſelf; whilſt pretenders to extraordinary Purity have acted in conjunction with notorious Rebels, Religion has been miſunderſtood as if it were too much a Friend, or at leaſt not enough an Enemy to Faction and Rebellion; and becauſe Seditious and Traiterous practiſes have been carried on under the form of Godlineſs, Some running into a contrary extreme have thought they could not ſufficiently ſhew their diſlike to Sedition without laying aſide all appearance of Piety; and, for fear of being rankt with Hypocrites, have choſe rather to be numbred with the Prophane. By theſe means

a great Reproach has been brought upon Religion in general, and greater ſtill upon *the* Reform'd; *That it is lawful to depoſe and murder Princes*, was a doctrine heretofore thought peculiar to the *Church of Rome*; to Proteſt againſt that doctrine, amongſt other abominations of that Church, was the deſign and glory of the Reformation: how great a Scandal therefore muſt thoſe Men have brought upon the *Proteſtant* Religion, who at the ſame time that they profeſs'd a more than ordinary Zeal againſt *Popery*, gave too much countenance to ſome of the *worſt* principles, of the *worſt* Men, of the *worſt* Church in the World, in its *worſt* and moſt *corrupted* State! From this great Scandal our holy Religion had been free, had all thoſe Men, who we would hope were truly in its Intereſts, taken ſufficient care to keep at a due diſtance from the Councels and Meaſures of Such as had no Religion; had they not by *uniting with their Aſſemblies*, and engaging too far with them, given us a plain proof, how neceſſary it is that *Good and well-meaning Men ſhould be nicely cautious how they join in publick deſigns with Men of Ill principles and Scandalous characters*; leaſt by ſuch an Union they bring a ſcandal upon themſelves and upon Religion tho they do not concur in the Worſt deſigns of thoſe wicked Men, with whom they are united.

A ſecond reaſon for this Caution is, becauſe by *Such an Union they are in great danger of being carried on to concur with ſuch Wicked Men in their very Worſt deſigns.*

When Good Men are embark't with Bad they lie under this great diſadvantage that the intentions of the One are open and manifeſt, while the deſigns of the Other

Other lie hid, and under ground. Little skill is requir'd to know what the Former aim at; but there is need of more penetration, than falls to the ſhare of every Good Man, to dive into the intricate Counſels of the Latter. Were wicked Men ſo ill advis'd as to diſplay the whole Scheme of their flagitious purpoſes at one view, none but ſuch as were equally Wicked with themſelves would come into it: in order therefore to draw in Men of better intentions, ſuch pernicious Ends muſt be induſtriouſly kept out of their ſight, and they muſt be let into the main Secret by leiſurely Steps, and inſenſible Degrees. Now whilſt Good Men are unhappily prevail'd upon to go hand in hand with the Wicked, and are not ſufficiently aware, whither their Companions are bent, it is no wonder, that being thus Blinded, they are too eaſily led out of the Way. And they are the more liable to be thus practis'd upon by ſuch as lie in wait to deceive, becauſe their own Plainneſs and Integrity makes them unapt to ſuſpect others of Artifice and Doubling; for an Honeſt Simplicity of acting by the rules of Uprightneſs, and an Happy Dexterity in finding out the wiles of the Crafty and Diſhoneſt, do not always go together; Good Men, when engag'd with Bad, are in our Saviors Language, like *Sheep in the midſt of Wolves*; but few of 'em are able upon this Occaſion to follow our Saviour's advice of *being wiſe as Serpents, and harmleſs as Doves.* And as for want of this neceſſary Wiſdom they are too often over-reacht by thoſe who are well vers'd in all the Arts of Deluſion, ſo are they frequently betray'd into the ſame fatal miſtakes by a miſplac'd Charity; which doth indeed of it ſelf diſpoſe them to *think no evil, to believe all things, to hope all things*, but

is never obſerv'd to operate ſo ſtrongly, even on Good Men, as when they are to paſs a Judgment upon the Actions of thoſe, with whom they are engag'd in one common Cauſe. For the appellations of *Honeſt, Worthy, Well-principled*, do in the Language of thoſe who moſt uſe 'em, generally ſignifie no more than that the Perſons thus ſtil'd and diſtinguiſh'd do in the Political opinions they maintain, and the Civil Intereſts they eſpouſe, intirely agree with thoſe who thus denominate 'em; So evident is it, that a much leſs degree of Charity is neceſſary to make Men believe and hope well of their Own party, than is requiſite to make 'em equally diſpos'd to judge favourably of Others. An hearty Affection therefore to a Cauſe will go a great way towards miſleading even the Beſt Men in their Opinions concerning thoſe who joyn with them in the ſervice of it: for ſo far as any are well wiſhers to this Cauſe, they are adjudg'd of courſe to be truly Good Men; and if after this, there be any thing *doubtful* in their Carriage, it will be Conſtrued in the beſt Senſe for the ſake of that One Quality, which is lookt upon to be without doubt worthy of Praiſe. Wicked Men will take all poſſible care to hide their faults from the Perſonal knowledge of thoſe Good Men, by whom if they were better known they would be leſs truſted; the Notice therefore of theſe faults muſt come to 'em from the teſtimony of Others; which muſt be very ſtrong and convincing to perſuade Men of what they have no mind to be perſwaded. Now whilſt Good and Well-meaning Men are under ſuch ſtrong prepoſſeſſions to think well of their own party; whilſt all care poſſible is taken to keep 'em in the Dark, and whilſt they are willing enough

enough to ſhut their Eyes againſt the Light, if ever it ſhould break in upon 'em, can it reaſonably be expected that thoſe who are reſolv'd to judge ſo favourably of the Perſons with whom they are linkt, ſhould be over-ſuſpicious of their Deſigns? is it not much rather to be fear'd, that for want of a juſt Suſpicion they ſhould be Unwillingly ſubſervient to 'em? Now when Good Men for lack of ſufficient fore-ſight have unawares made thoſe ſteps, which, when they give themſelves leave to reflect upon, they cannot but think were falſe Ones, tho' they may perhaps have now and then a faint inclination to go back, they will find it very difficult to come to a ſteady reſolution of retreating: For in ſuch a caſe to recede is to confeſs that they were in the wrong; which is a greater degree of mortification than even the Beſt Men can readily ſubmit to. Thoſe Wicked Perſons who have by Falſe and Specious pretences prevail'd upon 'em to go ſo far, will fright 'em from all thoughts of a retreat by the odious Names of Apoſtate and Deſertor; and thus having by Craft perſuaded 'em *to go one mile*, they will by Force *compell 'em to go twain.* And they are now under the ſtronger inducements to Proceed, becauſe by this Confederacy with Evil Men they have juſtly forfeited their Reputation with the Good; ſo that ſhould they be diſpos'd to leave their preſent Friends, they would have no great reaſon to hope for an hearty reception from Thoſe, whom they have been at ſo much pains to make their Enemies. Having therefore no encouragement to expect good quarter from the Oppoſite ſide, they are neceſſarily determin'd to ſtay where they are: Nor are they here any long-

er

er Welcome, than they are Uſeful; and muſt therefore hope for Protection upon no other terms then an Unſhaken Fidelity to the Cauſe. When they were at firſt entred into it, they might be allow'd to judge for themſelves; but being now engag'd beyond retreat, they muſt be intirely under the direction of their Leaders. *Whilſt they were Young they girded themſelves, and walkt whither they would; but now they are Old, they ſtretch forth their hands, and another girds them, and carries them whither they would not.* Thus are Good Men, whilſt they act in conjunction with Men of an Oppoſite character, carried on ſtep by ſtep to thoſe Extremes, which at their firſt ſetting out they could not have thought it poſſible for 'em ever to have arriv'd at. It was in their own power at firſt whether they would at all *unite themſelves to the Aſſemblies* of the Wicked; but when they are once got into the Circle, they are ſo far enchanted, that they cannot find their way out again: They might perhaps be ſo Credulous as to hope that the Wicked, with whom they are join'd, might be made ſubſervient to Their Good purpoſes; but their Experience will in the iſſue teach 'em, what they might have learnt at a cheaper rate, that *Good Men who have too little Knowledge of the World, are very proper tools for Bad Men of greater reach to work with.* The moſt profligate Perſons may indeed be made the unwilling Inſtruments of great Good to the world; but it ſhould ſeem to be the peculiar Prerogative of the Almighty to make this right Uſe of 'em. God's Holineſs is indefectible, and can therefore receive no taint from his making even the Sins of Men cooperate to the bringing about his

his Righteous purpoſes: He is a Being of infinite Wiſdom, who ſeeth thro' the moſt hidden deſigns of thoſe Wicked Perſons, whom he employs in his work; and he is furniſh'd with infinite Power to check 'em at his pleaſure, and ſo to bend and turn 'em, as that they may do His work, whilſt they think they are doing their Own. But ſuch a management of Evil Men to Good purpoſes, as this, is too difficult for the Beſt of Mortals; it is above 'em, *they cannot attain unto it.* Neither is Their Sanctity ſo inviolable, as to be proof againſt infection; nor Their Knowledge ſo infallible, as to ſecure 'em from being impos'd upon; nor their Power ſo uncontrollable, that They ſhould be in no danger of being over-rul'd. Great is the Contagion of Vice, and Good Men cannot be too careful to keep out of the reach of it: *He that toucheth pitch*, ſaith the Wiſe Man, *ſhall be defiled therewith.* Great is the Frailty of Virtue, and Good Men cannot be too cautious how they expoſe it to the Aſſaults of the Wicked. For as the ſame Wiſe Man obſerves; *How agree the Kettle and the Earthen Pot together? If the One be ſmitten againſt the Other, it ſhall be broken.*

That what has been ſaid concerning the great danger of being carried on to the worſt deſigns of Wicked Men by too cloſe a Combination with them, is not an empty Speculation, but grounded in the Nature of the thing, and verified by Experience, is plain from the Progreſs of that Rebellion, which at laſt ended in the conſummate Villainy of this day. Could Thoſe who *took councel together againſt the Lord's Anointed*, have foreſeen from the beginning all

all the fatal Conſequences, which were ſucceſſively haſtning on; Could they, when they eſpied *as it were a little cloud ariſing out of the Sea, like a Man's hand*, have from that time prognoſticated, what *Winds and Storms* were thenceforth gathering; Could they have taken in at One view the Confuſions of a long War, the Deſolation of a flouriſhing Kingdom, and the Overthrow of a truly Primitive and Apoſtolical Church; Could they have been then convinc'd, that the Meaſures they took would neceſſarily end in the total loſs of all their Civil Rights; that the intire frame of the Government would be ſhatter'd, and broken to pieces, and that the Wiſe and Wholſom Conſtitution of Parliaments would be effectually deſtroy'd; Could they have fore-known that their ſtruggle for Liberty would in the event make them Abſolute Slaves; that the Weapons which they put into the hands of Mercenary Men would be pointed upon Themſelves; and that inſtead of a Lawful Prince governing them with a Paternal Affection, Tyrants ſhould ſet themſelves over them, *who would chaſtiſe them with Scorpions*; Could they have preſag'd, what a long train of Evils they would entail upon their Poſterity; Evils, which We at this day feel, and from which nothing but the Conduct of a Valiant Prince, the Wiſdom a truly Engliſh Parliament, and the Providence of a Gracious God can reſcue Us; Could they, in a word, have had a clear Proſpect of all thoſe Sins and Miſeries which were to uſher in, to accompany, and to follow an Inteſtine War; Such a frightful Scene as this would have ſcar'd all, who were not deſperately Wicked, from having any ſhare in beginning

ginning those troubles, of which they could see no End. But those Master-workmen, who laid the Foundation of all these mischiefs, were too wise to let their Under-labourers into the knowledge of the whole Scheme: This was a Secret proper to be imparted to them by degrees, and according as they were able to bear it. To have told them at first, that they were oppress, and that they could not do themselves and their Country Justice without Murdering the Tyrant, who oppress'd 'em, would have been too harsh a Doctrine, and not easily digested: to make it therefore less distastful, and more likely to be receiv'd, it was expedient that it should be given *precept after precept, line after line, here a little and there a little.* Those, who were told and perswaded that they were oppress, were easily wrought upon to Petition for a Redress of Grievances: had they stopt there and been decent in their Addresses of this kind, the Constitution might thus far have justified them: but *Petitions* soon pav'd the Way to Remonstrances, and Remonstrances to Tumults. When they had insulted their Sovereign in his Palace they were less Scrupulous of taking up Arms against Him in the Field; To treat Him as a Captive whom they had overcome in War, and to seize upon the spoil, was with them easy to execute the right of Conquest: After they had induced their Prince, to pass Sentence upon Him, and to Condemn and execute Him as a Common Malefactor, was a larger Step indeed than any of the former, and which few therefore, even of Those who had gone on undauntedly thus far, could be prevail'd upon to make, but which after such a Pro-

greſs from one degree of Inſolence to another, is not wholly impoſſible to be accounted for.

Thus have I endeavour'd to repreſent the fatal Conſequences of too ſtrict an Union of Good and well meaning Men with Perſons of Ill Principles and Characters, both from the Reaſon of the thing, and from that Remarkable Inſtance, which the Sin of this day affords Us; And God grant that neither our *State*, nor our *Church*, may ever in this Age, or in thoſe to come, feel the miſchiefs of ſuch an unhappy Conjunction. May We be nicely ſcrupulous, how We enter into too near a fellow-ſhip, with Any ſort of Evil-doers; may We be in a More Eſpecial manner cautious, how We joyn our ſelves with perſons of ſuch Principles and practiſes, as the Patriarch of my Text Deteſted and Curs'd in his two degenerate Sons, *Simeon* and *Levi*.

We have here in the preſence of God humbly and devoutly implor'd his Mercy, *that the guilt of that Sacred and innocent Bloud, which was as upon this day ſhed, may not at any time be viſited upon Us, or our Poſterity.* Now if We have not offer'd unto God the Sacrifice of Fools, if We have not been guilty of the groſſeſt Hypocriſie and Prevarication, We muſt in our Conſciences be thoroughly perſwaded of the Piety and Innocency of the Royal Martyr: What we have confeſt with our Mouths, We muſt believe in our Hearts, that the Murder, this Day committed, was a Sin Abominable in the ſight of God, and which ought to be Abhor'd by all Good Men. And undoubtedly, whilſt there ſhall be any diſtinction kept up amongſt Us between Right and Wrong, Order and Confuſion, Government and Anarchy;

Whilst *to do well and to suffer patiently for well doing* shall be esteem'd *praise worthy*; and *to persecute the Righteous, and slay the Innocent* shall be a Character of Reproach; Whilst *Love, Peace, Long suffering,* Gal. 6. 22. *Gentleness, Goodness, Faith, Meekness, and Temperance,* shall be numbred amongst *the Fruits of the Spirit*; and *Hatred, Variance, Wrath, Strife, Seditions, Here-* Gal. 5. 20. *sies, Envyings, Murders, and such like* shall stand in that black Catalogue which St. *Paul* has given Us of Capital and Damnable Sins; So long the *Memory of this Righteous* Prince *shall be blessed*, and the *Name of his Wicked* Destroyers *shall rot*. And *Blessed*, I doubt not, is *He who was persecuted for Righteousness Sake, for His is the Kingdom of Heaven*; *Cursed* shall be the Memory of *Those who took a reward to Slay an Innocent Person*; *and all the People shall say*, Amen.

FINIS.

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